DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 328 236 IR 014 839

AUTHOR Vandenberg, Donald
TITLE Charlatans, Knowledge, Curriculum and Phenomenological Research. Working Papers in Distance Education, No. 5.
INSTITUTION Queensland Univ., St. Lucia (Australia). School of External Studies and Continuing Education
REPORT NO ISSN-0725-0223
PUB DATE Feb 82
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at a seminar in the Division of External Studies, University of Queensland (St. Lucia, Queensland, Australia, February 1982).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Concept Formation; Curriculum Development; Educational Philosophy; *Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Epistemology; Fundamental Concepts; *Ideology; *Lecture Method; *Phenomenology; Postsecondary Education
IDENTIFIERS *Printed Materials

ABSTRACT

Arguing that the word "knowledge" has become unfashionable, having been replaced by "science," this paper begins by positing that there are many sciences and that it is the task of basic theorist within each science to ascertain the appropriate procedures, principles, and canons of enquiry based on detailed knowledge of the fundamental phenomena within the domain. All canons of inquiry or criteria of good knowledge are, therefore, field-dependent and domain-specific. The only valid knowledge worthy of inclusion in the school curriculum is the theoretical knowledge of the individual academic disciplines and the practical knowledge of the arts, crafts, trades, sports, and professions, that has been validated by qualified experts. Knowledge in the curriculum should help the young to become aware of things in the world that they should be exploring if they are to become responsible adults. When it does, education becomes the conceptual grasp of perceptual reality, and the selection of materials from the academic disciplines for the school curriculum is a matter for phenomenological research. What has to be ascertained is how the pupil can come aware of the objects in the various domains in such a way that they remain continuous with the things perceived in his common sense experience. In distance education, the lack of direct communication between the teacher and the students presents a major pedagogical problem. The written lecture becomes a key element in the package of instructional materials, and it should be treated as a personal communication from the teacher to the student which integrates the other course materials. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED328236

NO. 5

Charlatans, Knowledge, Curriculum and Phenomenological Research

Donald Vandenberg

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Philip Kerr

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

WORKING PAPERS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Division of External Studies, University of Queensland issues a series of occasional papers in Distance Education to allow for the timely dissemination of research into Distance Education.

The purpose of the Working Paper Series is to bring to the attention of research workers in Distance Education the outcome of research in this field, especially substantial empirical studies in Distance Education, more quickly than the professional journals (which are now subject to considerable publication delay).

For further enquiries about the series contact:

The Director,
Division of External Studies,
University of Queensland,
ST. LUCIA. Q. 4067
AUSTRALIA.

ISBN 0725-0223

NO. 5

Charlatans, Knowledge, Curriculum and Phenomenological Research

Donald Vandenberg

Presented at a seminar in the Division of External Studies, February 1982.

Dr. Donald Vandenberg is Reader in
Education in the Division of External
Studies, University of Queensland.

Several things prompt me to reconsider the role of knowledge in the curriculm. (a) The increasing dependence of an advanced industrial society upon the theoretical knowledge acquired in tertiary schooling. (b) The attacks on that knowledge, science and technology by the counterculture, Neo-Marxists and the "new" sociologists of education. (c) The attacks on progressive education by the revisionist historians. (d) The question of whether educational theorists like John Dewey were giving the education of the working classes away while pretending to implement democracy in education. (e) The prevalence of curriculum theory that lacks a predominant concern for knowledge. (f) The ideologies of psychology of education that substitute artificially constructed models of learning for the kinds of learning that belong in schools as institutions of learning. (g) The loss of visibility of the cognitive domain when the behavioral or social sciences are applied to education. (h) An undue adulation of science in Western civilization, particularly when associated with technology in the ideologies of scientism and technicism.

Perhaps the main reason, however, is that the word "knowledge" has become unfashionable in educational discourse. Instead, the talk is about science.

Unfortunately, there is no such thing as science.

There are many sciences.

The talk about science reifies the word. It is compelled to select one of the sciences and call its features the characteristics of science. To generalize from one science to all the sciences, however, commits the fallacy of composition. The standard move among philosophers of science is to start with physics or the natural sciences. A formula about the nature of this science is drawn up and applied to all other sciences. This procedure is unscientific and ideological. It is not possible to say which of the many sciences is "most scientific" as if others should model themselves after it. The error lies in reifying the word "science" and then believing there is one such thing called science.

Everything changes if one begins with the very scientific observation that there are all sorts of things called "science" that merely bear "family resemblances" to each other. In addition to the physical sciences, there are earth sciences, life sciences, social sciences, behavioral sciences, medical and health sciences, agricultural sciences, and so on.

No philosopher of science, no philosopher of education, and no curriculum theorist as such has the qualification necessary to ascertain the nature and validity of the knowledge in any of the special sciences. The necessary condition is advanced study of the intensity associated with the higher degree. Many highly qualified people in the various domains, in fact, are unwilling to reflect upon their concrete interests to venture statements about the nature and validation of knowledge in their domain. It is the task of basic theorists within each of the sciences to ascertain the procedures, principles, and canons of enquiry appropriate to the domain. This absolutely requires detailed knowledge of the fundamental phenomena within the domain. Someone who would try to do the philosophy of a particular science without mastering the knowledge of its distinctive phenomena is a charlatan. Similarly, anyone who is not qualified to reflect upon the nature and validity of knowledge in a specific domain is without qualification to reflect on knowledge in several or all of the sciences, and anyone who attempts to specify the canons of enquiry for domains of knowledge in which he has not established his authority by a superior mastery of their content is a charlatan.

In other words, all canons of enquiry, or all criteria of good knowledge, are field-dependent and therefore domain-specific.

It follows that the only valid knowledge is (a) that which is found in the academic disciplines, validated by the experts who have qualified themselves in the respective domains of knowledge, and (b) that which is found in the arts, crafts, trades, sports and professions, validated by the masters of the respective arts, crafts, trades, sports and professions.

It also follows that the only knowledge worthy of inclusion in the school curriculum is the theoretical knowledge of the academic disciplines and the practical knowledge of the arts, crafts, trades, sports and professions.

People in the art, crafts, trades, sports and professions know what they are doing. Although much of their knowledge is practical knowledge, it is intersubjectively testable. It is mostly learned through an apprenticeship with a master and has its own kind of validity. When apprenticeships are interspersed with classroom instruction, the apprentice themselves call the knowledge acquired in classrooms "theory". It is not important to decide at this time whether this knowledge should be validated by masters of the craft or by experts in related academic disciplines, for the point is that it has been tested and confirmed by one or the other, and that its acquisition in a classroom considers it as theory. It, too, is theoretical knowledge.

Studios, shops, kitchens, theatres, laboratories, and athletic fields belong in schools to assist in the acquisition of the practical components of the various arts, crafts, trades, sports and sciences, but these aspects can on principle be learned elsewhere in a work-study type of apprenticeship or arrangement, and these practical activities are taught in schools because of their theoretical components. It follows that the kind of knowledge for which schools are needed is theoretical knowledge.

It follows that the unique mission of the school concerns theory and that the essential characteristics of the school is theoretical instruction.

The importance of these rather prosaic observations is that they are non-ideological. It is a point of view obtained by the rejection of the various ideologies previously known as theories of knowledge, philosophies of science and philosophies of education that pretend to know more about the procedures for discovering knowledge in a domain than its most qualified experts. This pretence is accompanied by a set of ideas that serve other than legitimate cognitive functions, i.e., by an ideology that serves personal and social functions rather than truth.

The viewpoint is not a revival of a Platonic view of education that prefers theoretical knowledge on epistemological or metaphysical grounds. The explicit inclusion of the arts, crafts, trades and sports prevents this interpretation. It is Platonic, however, in an institutional sense. Plato founded the Academy as an institution of adult learning with a curriculum comprising the best knowledge in his society. Similarly, the best knowledge available in our society is in the curriculum of our Academy, the university, in what we still call the academic disciplines in honor of Plato's Academy. Knowledge discovered in other areas of society, as in industry and research institutes, is published in learned journals and adopted by the university disciplines forthwith. This means that there is no court of appeal beyond the authority of the most accomplished university scholars except posterity.

This sociology of good knowledge presupposes an epistemology, but before it is outlined it will help to indicate how the various strands of the school curriculum should be conceptualized. The curriculum should include strands relating to all the areas of the world that each person ought to explore and know something about in order to be able to live a contextualized, meaningful life as an adult.

The child should explore the physical world, the animal world, the plant world, the agricultural world, the chemical world, the interpersonal world, the commercial world, the industrial world, the social world, the historical world, the political world, and the worlds of art, sport, music, etc. The reference to the various worlds, or sub-worlds, is to the regions of the world that should be explored in everyone's education. To each of these there is a corresponding academic discipline: physics, zoology, botany, agricultural science, chemistry, ethics, economics, sociology, history, political science, human movement studies, and so on.

It would be better to say, however, that the child should explore and become thoroughly aware of physical things, living things, growing things, marketed things, made things, human things, economic, historical, social and political things, and artistic, playing and musical things, etc. The reference to things is to the objects one ought to become aware of within each of the regions of the world. It is preferable to regions because it does not reify the regions. It also correctly indicates that educational events arise out of the exploration of the things in the world in order to become more richly aware of them, and not to become aware of the region of the world or of the academic discipline as a reified body of knowledge about that region.

The child becomes aware of things in these various regions without formal educaton. Playing by himself and with other children, interaction with parents, etc., enable the child to become aware of common sense objects in the everyday world. Because university scholars in the various disciplines study the same things that the child explores in his ordinary experience, the theoretical knowledge of the disciplines can be organized in conceptual schemes to facilitate the child's becoming aware of things in the perceptual world. This is precisely the role of knowledge in the curriculum for general education. It should help the young to become aware of things in the world that they should be exploring if they are to become able to assume a position of responsible adulthood in society. When it does, it constitutes education as the conceptual grasp of perceptual reality.

This raises the question of phenomenological research in curriculum development, but before it is outlined the epistemology and metaphysics underlying this claim should be explicated. The stance is not ideological in the sense of presenting a favored theory of knowledge. The account is basically descriptive within the framework of the best knowledge in Western civilization.

Although it accepts the basic empiricism found within the university disciplines, all of which presume to be about the real world, the epistemology unavoidably presupposed is neither empiricist nor rationalist. There is no preference stated for a favored source of knowledge such as perception (or through "sense data") or such as conception (or through reasoning). Every disciplined study of things in the world requires both perception and conception. Some regions of the world may very well have more "data" available to perceptual consciousness, and other may very well depend more on conceptual consciousness. Because the matter is domain-specific, ascertaining the appropriate relation of perceptual awareness to conceptualizaton must be left to the basic theorists within each of the disciplines.

The point does not matter for education. In any case, education is the conceptual acquisition of perceptual reality. It is made possible by the theoretical knowledge, i.e., by the conceptual schemata, found within the academic disciplines and within the arts, crafts, trades, sports and professions.

Although the things encountered in ordinary experience are reality they are not perceived in complicated, detailed, interrelated ways. The objects fundamental to the academic disciplines may be these same things, but there is a sharp

difference between the thing known in ordinary experience and the same thing known through its disciplines study. The difference is the degree of precision and complexity with which the object is constituted by perceptual consciousness.

This descriptive account of the phenomenology of the case is similar to the metaphysics of Charles Saunders Peirce if one claims that the object is within a domain are reality when perceived by qualified investigators, i.e., by someone who has been initiated into the community of qualified investigators. If this means that reality is partly socially constructed, it also means it is partly given to those who have the curiosity to allow themselves to let things be what they are.

The community of qualified investigators supplies the criteria of intersubjective validity that is a main aspect of the communicability of knowledge. If the previous claim that there is no such thing as science is true, however, there is no such thing as a community of investigators as Peirce held. There are many communities of investigators. Each discipline is constituted by such a community that is even formally organized into a learned society that holds annual conferences, etc. To be a qualified investigator means to conduct research that is acceptable to the previously constituted community of

investigators of the region of the world within which the research is conducted.

This framework, however, merely concerns the communicability of the contributions to knowledge, not truth or reality. Peirce's view on the latter is concisely stated in the following sentence:

> The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by the truth and the object represented in this opinion is the real.(1)

A consensus of opinion within a discipline is insufficent to establish truth because any given consensus would not include "all who investigate", which includes posterity and all devisable ways of interacting with the things investigated to compel them to disclose their truth. On the other hand, the best guess about which opinion is "fated to be ultimately agreed to" can be no better than the consensus of opinion that currently exists within the relevant discipline. That opinion contains truth to the extent it discloses the reality of things as attested within the disclosure that is enabled by the schemata of the discipline.

The acquisition of the schemata of a discipline therefore enables one to constitute the objects of the region of the world as the transphenomenal realities they are when they disclose

1. Charles Saunders Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear", Values in a Universe of Chance, ed. Philip P, Wiener (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 133.

themselves to qualified investigators.

The educational justification of the use of this knowledge, however, is that children and youth should be exploring the things in the world as part of their development to adulthood, and that these things are the same things submitted to disciplined study by university researchers. One learns about these things through their disciplined study, i.e., through the respective disciplines, each of which has developed precisely to employ the most disciplined and reliable methods of studying the objects within its preferred region of the world.

This view is more basic than the question of whether pedagogy should focus upon the procedures for discovering knowledge within a domain or utilize a didactic, expository method to focus upon the content within the domain. These alternatives reify aspects of knowledge and arrest attention on something other than the fundamental phenomena within the domain. The student should become aware of the objects as they are already known. When he can constitute them within his own consciousness of them as the publicly known objects they are, he is prepared to enquire into their unknown characteristics. The classical conflict between discovery and expository methods is epistemically beside the point because what is significant is that students come to utilize the conceptual patterns of the already constituted objects in the already constituted

disciplines to become more aware of the things in the world around them.

There is nothing else to know.

There is no other way to know it.

It would seem, then, that the selection of materials from the academic disciplines for the school curriculum is neither a matter for pedagogy nor epistemology but for phenomenological research. What has to be ascertained is how the pupil can become aware of the objects in the various domains in such a way that they remain continuous with the things perceived in his common sense experience. Two scenarios can be suggested.

The high road begins from above, i.e., with the kind of phenomenological research that the basic theorist within each domain should conduct to establish the essential characteristics of the phenomena distinctive of the particular discipline. This involves phenomenological descriptions of those objects in the formulation of a regional ontology in the kind of program outlined in the last chapter of Husserl's Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology. This would result in answers to the following kind of questions. How does one become aware of

physical objects the way physicists see them? How can one become aware of historical events? Of political, social, or anthropological "objects"? Of economic objects? How does one become aware of living things the way biologists see them? These questions should be answered for each region of the world the young explore in their general education, and primary concern should be given to the most important things within each region.

The low road begins with some actual fact, concept, or theory to be taught and investigates just how the pupil can become aware of the thing in the world as a worldly object. Suppose, for example, the children are to learn that Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson crossed the Blue Mountains in 1813. Although the details are necessary, one does not want them to learn the sentence that states them. The proper names are quite meaningless unless the child's imaginative consciousness can be drawn out to project back then, and over there, to the pristine forest inhabited only by the aboriginal people and can distinguish the images of these three settlers and imagine what they must have felt as they passed beyond the perimeter of the inhabited portion of the continent and saw the pastoral landscape on the other side of the mountains. The children should also become aware of the growing significance of the awareness the settlers were acquiring of the topographical features of the continent and the implications for the subsequent development of the east coast of Australia. This is the low road because if one wanted to investigate how a child could become aware of such an

event as part of his or her perceptual world, one would not ask an expert in Australian history. The best person to consult would likely be an experienced and able upper primary school teacher. The low road begins with the experienced teacher°s pre-theoretical understanding of how students become aware of the objects within a domain and tries to explicate the constitution of the object from a learner's perspective.

These two scenarios indicate that the phenomenological research needed to develop the school curriculum cannot be done by someone well versed in phenomenology unless the person is also reasonably expert in a particular branch of knowledge and has experience teaching at the level for which materials are to be prepared.

Such phenomenological research within each of the regions of the world to be explored in general education calls for an inversion of the pedagogy of the oppressed of Paulo Freire. He started with oppressed adults and recommended the development of a curriculum from the themes already embedded in the oppressed consciousness. A curriculum for the schools, on the other hand, ought to assume the concern is for non-oppressed children and youth. Then the themes are schemata to be built into the minds of young people through the use of instructional materials that will enable them to come to perceive things in the way they are perceived by the most liberated consciousnesses in Western

civilization.

This can promote education without oppression to the extent that the acquisition of the conceptual schemes of the disciplines enables the consciousness of the learner to project out to the things in the world of which s/he is becoming aware and supplies the categories that make subsequent experience within the specific region of the world possible.

Because the recommended phenomenological research falls within the various domains of knowledge, ascertaining its methodology requires expertise in one of the relevant disciplines. If the processes whereby consciousness constitutes its objects are field-dependent and domain-specific, then these considerations can proceed no further than to recommend that the specified research be undertaken by people with the necessary expertise in the substantive domains of knowledge and in its pedagogy in the primary and secondary schools.

*****

For the present purposes, however, I will try to build some bridges to subjects offered externally through DES and then turn to the pedagogy of external studies. I will exclude instruction to produce graduate students and consider only general, liberal education, beginning with English, which I would classify as a linguistic and hermeneutical science (as are the subjects taught externally such as French, German, Japanese, Classics, and parts of Religion, History and Government). By "hermeneutical science" I mean it contains interpretive knowledge. I submit that the educational reason for reading literature and historical documents is to acquire their understanding of human life.

Literature, in other words, belongs to general education because it embodies a distinct kind of knowledge about human beings. Like any knowledge, its criteria of validity are domain-specific. It is not that one should learn about poety, drama, and fiction but that one should read poetry, drama, and fiction to learn about human life through them. They furnish unique modes of conceptualization that are necessary to elucidate the inchoate feelings acquired in one's own emotional life. Because of prevailing ideologies of science, it may seem strange to claim that literature employs conceptual schemes and furnishes theoretical knowledge, but even the poet puts concepts together. Using old words in a new way, the poet makes meaning out of an intuitively grasped aspect of human life, conceptualizing the insight to interpret human life. For example, "red" is one

concept, "rose" another, and "a red red rose" is part of a poetical conceptualizaton of this thing called "love."(2)

The bridge to History will begin with a learning experience some members of DES had in common, i.e., the Inaugural Lecture on the history of the city. The lecture cited sources, noted interpretations, and evaluated previous work, but this scholarly apparatus was merely the scaffolding for the imaginative constitution of the object, i.e., the city as such in its temporal dimension. Ordinary language and bits of data in series of factlike statements are the historian's theoretical means for displaying the object of his research, e.g., the evolution of the

2. Because literary knowledge is often underrated when considered piecemeal, I will list some titles from belles lettres, including poetry, fiction, theatre, and cinema, to show the extensiveness of literary sources for becoming aware of the many facets of this one thing called "love": The Iliad, The Odyssey, The Song of Solomon, The Aeneid, Tristan and Isolde, Troilus and Creseyda, The Divine Comedy, Romeo and Juliet, The Red and the Black, A Red Red Rose, Sonnets from the Portugese, Madame Bovary, Jane Eyre, Ulysses, Lady Chatterly's Lover, Porgie and Bess, Madame Butterfly, The Childrens Hour, Our Lady of the Flowers, A Man and a Woman, Lolita, Tim, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Light in August, Another Country, etc.

city as a social institution, and for changing the common sense thing into a known, unified object. External students who can now also become perceptually aware of the historical growth of the city through similar conceptual means can continue their exploration of this thing into the present in Urban Geography, which, I would submit, is not about Earth but human life.

If History includes the creation of an awareness of significant events (such as the French, American and Russian revolutions), then documents, fact-like statements, scholarly opinions, and biographies should assist the observation of the event that is no longer there. The point is to gain a perceptual grasp of the whole phenomenon through linguistic means. It may be that some form of descriptive narrative is necessary to enable students to become aware of them as human events.

It seems to me that an undervalued kind of History for general education is the evolution of societal institutions. For example, if the study of government includes the study of political parties and institutions of one's own society, it might be founded on the factual, historical conditions of the evolution of parliaments to enable the understanding of parliament as such, as an independent phenomenon, although this might be part of the student's exploration of government, rather than History.

The rejection of ideologies of science might suggest a rejection of political ideologies, for only a charlatan would pretend to know the best form of government or society. This is true, but it does not follow that political ideologies should be excluded from general education. An objective, non-ideological approach can help students study, compare, and evaluate them in epistemically valid ways, and this can be helpful and perhaps even necessary to transcend ideological thinking in general. I would therefore argue that political ideologies should be studied for the same reason the major world religions and ethical systems should be part of general education. They offer interpretive schemata of major aspects of human life, these may be an essential ingredient of a meaningful life, and the study of various perspectives promotes the universalistic objectivity necessary for the achievement of human dignity.

There is only one thing I can say about Economics, i.e., that school leavers should become as aware of the economic system as possible because good, hard knowledge about it that really discloses the way it works is essential to the life of an independently functioning adult and a necessary condition of the intelligent use of the ballot box. Economics might have the same role in general education at the tertiary level, for all I know.

Perhaps these so-called bridges can lead others to better ideas if there is agreement that the theoretical knowledge in their own discipline is the appropriate means to enable tertiary students to become aware of the things in the world in their own domain.

The consideration of the pedagogy of external studies will begin with the claim that ideologies of science and knowledge reify aspects of knowledge (such as sense data, quantified data, propositional statements, methods of enquiry, and conceptual structures). When applied to pedagogy, these result in ideological distortions. Some elements of knowledge are given more prominence than others that are equally essential. Perhaps the most fundamental reification, however, is that of knowledge itself.

There is no such thing as knowledge. Knowledge does not exist as an independent entity.

People know things. Some people's knowing about things is more disciplined and truthful than others.

If one teaches according to some educational ideology that reifies elements of knowledge or knowledge itself, one promotes the development of "false consciousness", as it were. If one simply talks with students about some things in the world in a disciplined way, however, one teaches them what one knows about them and opens them up to those things without oppression.

It seems very difficult to avoid reifying knowledge in external studies, however, because one cannot talk with students about things, at least not directly. Consequently, knowledge seems to become identical with the package of instructional materials prepared for mailing, and teaching reduced to the preparation of the package. Excellence in teaching seems to become a matter of graphic design. That, however, is not true.

For example, the materials prepared by some well-known institutions such as the Open University that I have seen were over-structured, over-formalized, and over-conceptualized. Rather than using the linguistic means to carry on a disciplined conversation about the things in some region of the world with students, they reify knowledge as a thing to be learned. The student cannot open the materials to see what the teacher has to say, for they dissociate the conceptual aspects of the discipline from the living perspective of the person who is aware of things

in the world in a disciplined way, not unlike books and learned journal articles. Objectified, scholarly writing is satisfaction for teaching materials when a live teacher is present to help students learn how to read them with the skills and conceptual apparatus that the disciplined mind in the specific specialization uses to de-reify the content. The materials mentioned, however, do not pedagogize the content of the discipline. They simplify it, but they do not teach it.

The lecture notes of DES are in this respect pedagogically superior. Lectures are not chapters of a book. They are, rather, a personal account of a certain thing. They are a topic worked up to present to students in pedagogically useful form. An ordinary university lecture would not be publishable. The content, however, would be far less reified by the medium of expression than published papers. It would seem that printed lectures for external students ought to be more formal than the live lecture but less formal than textbook chapters. If they differ from the formal paper or chapter of a book by including the attitudes and enthusiasms that are expressed in the tone of voice and inflections of the live lecture in their style, as well as the illustrations and explanations too copious for textbook inclusion, they wil involve much less reification of knowledge. Because they do not go out to a public audience, they can be addressed within the intimacy of professional confidence.

The question is how the written lecture can be personalized without losing academic validity, how one can take the objectified content of the subject and subjectivize it within one s own mind and then use it to talk about the things in the domain with students so that they come to know and value those things the way the lecturer knows and values them. The task is to master the knowledge so well one no longer teaches "it" but uses its conceptual elements to talk about things in the perceptual world. This is what teaching is, regardless of the proximity of one's students.

When the written lecture employs the formal manner of the textbook chapter, the writer of this reified knowledge does not appear within the student's horizons, and s/he is essentially without a teacher. On the other hand, if the student receives only a set of photocopied articles, then no matter how well integrated the readings may be, they appear as bits and pieces to the student, who does not possess the conceptual structure that the lecturer used to "integrate" them, and the student is also essentially without a teacher. The set of readings therefore has to be discussed in the lecture to enable the student to utilize the vocabulary, techniques of interpretation and evaluation, and theoretical attitude specific to the discipline, or else the student is without instruction. In other words, sets of readings sent to students need to be submitted to pedagogic treatment, i.e., need to be taught, to overcome their reifications and

enable the student to become aware of something in the world.

This is why it seems to me that the pedagogy of external studies is particularly vulnerable to the danger of reifying knowledge. Simply because there is an instructional package to embody the conversation between teacher and student, the package can inadvertently be modelled after a textbook or book of readings. Both of these kinds of packages leave the student without a perceived teacher and explicit instruction. This is extremely de-motivating, especially in general education. When internal students get a textbook and/or book of readings, they also get a live teacher to help them learn how to read them, but when the packages sent to external students resemble the textbook or book of readings, they receive no instruction at all, and the package omits the one necessary thing, teaching.

In either case, the content has not be externalized. It has not been treated pedagogically as a personal communication from the teacher to the distant student about the things of the world of which s/he is to become aware. This means that to externalize one's subject one has to treat it pedagogically through the medium of printing without allowing one's familiarity with textbooks and books of readings to influence the style of presentation. One has to bear in mind that the written lecture

is a unique genre. It is not similar to other forms of writing, but to other forms of teaching. It is not that one is teaching at a distance that matters, for the external student to whom one writes can be as close as Mark Hopkins' proverbial student on the other end of the log. What matters is that one is teaching through written rather than spoken words.

It is not clear that I can say more about talking with students about things in the world through written disciplined conversations without encroaching on matters that are domain-dependent. Suffice it to say that it is the written lectures that external students receive that convinces them they are being taught the subject for which they are enrolled. This is necessary because the things in the world they are exploring can become accessible only through the visible presence of a trusted and beloved teacher.

Working Papers

in

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Previous Issues

No. 1 : Evaluation of a Third Year Distance Education Course: Monetary Economics.

by J.D. Stanford and D.W. Purie.

No. 2 : Application of 'Principles' of Adult Development and Learning to Distance Education.

by B.T. O'Rourke.

No. 3 : A Survey of the Counselling needs of External Students at the University of Queensland. 1980.

by E.E. Thiele.

No. 4 : Video as Supplementary Material. The Impact of an Alternative Development of Study Materials in Solving Formal Economic Problems.

by W. Lassner in collaboration with J. Barnels, E. Klein, P.J. Mattes, U. Rossié